

The Riverdale Books.

THE YOUNG VOYAGERS.

A STORY FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

BY

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Building the Raft.

THE YOUNG VOYAGERS.

I.

FRANK LEE was about ten years old. He was generally a very good boy, though sometimes a love of fun and of mischief would lead him astray.

His father was a very

rich man. He owned more houses and lands, and had more money, than any other man in Riverdale. So Frank had every thing he needed to make him happy.

He was the brother of Flora Lee, whom my young friends have read about in *The Little Merchant*; but he was not always so good as Flora. She always minded her father and mother, but

Frank would sometimes forget what they had told him.

One afternoon, when school did not keep, Frank went off to play with some other boys. The place chosen for their sports was near the house of Mrs. White, and not far from the river.

After he had played a while, he got tired of the fun, and left the other boys. He thought he would take a

walk down the river, and see if he could find any lilies.

He knew that Flora was very fond of the pretty white lilies that grow in ponds and rivers, and he wished to carry her a few. As he walked along, he cut a forked stick with which he could get the lilies out of the water.

He walked some distance without finding any lilies within his reach. There

were plenty of them, but they were so far from the bank that he could not reach them with his forked stick.

Then he thought, if he only had a boat, he could get just as many lilies as he wanted. There were plenty of boats on the river, and his father owned one in which he had often sailed.

But his father had told him never to get into a boat un-

less he, or some other man, should be with him. It was proper and right for his father to give him this strict charge, for little boys ought never to be allowed to go out in boats alone.

Frank thought his father was more nice than wise about it. He did not see why he should not take a sail, and have a good time on the water, as well as any

body else. He thought he could manage a boat very well.

Boys are very apt to think they know more than their parents, and they often get into trouble for this reason. The best way is always to mind father and mother. You will think so when you have read my story, if you do not think so now.

Frank was sorry he could

not find any lilies, for he wanted to surprise Flora, whom he loved very much. He meant to put a whole bunch of them around her plate at the tea table. He had thought just how he would place them, and how pretty they would look. He could almost see the smile of pleasure on his sister's face, as she came to the table.

He wanted so much to find

the lilies that he could not give up the search. He walked on a little farther, and, as he came round a bend of the river, he saw a boy hard at work on the bank.

When Frank reached the spot, he found it was Joe Birch. He had gathered a lot of rails and old boards. Some of them he had taken from the fences, which was wrong, for it let the horses

and cows out of the pasture into fields where they were not wanted.

Joe was making a raft out of these boards and rails. It was almost finished when Frank arrived; so he thought he would stop and see Joe go down the river on it.

He did not then think of such a thing as going with him, for Joe was known in Riverdale as a bad boy. His

father had told him not to play with him, for he would swear, lie, and even steal. He had been in a great many "scrapes," and all the good boys shunned him.

"Hallo, Frank Lee!" said Joe, when he saw the lily-hunter.

"What are you going to make?" asked Frank.

"I am making a raft. I am going to have a first rate

sail down the river," replied Joe.

"Where did you get these boards and rails?"

"I got 'em from the fences, and if you tell any body, I'll break your head."

"That was not right."

"Who says so?"

"I don't think it is. You will let the cattle out of the pasture into the cornfields and gardens."

"Don't you cry."

"I am not crying."

"Well, if you tell any body about the rails, I'll make you cry; that is all."

Frank thought he would walk along, for he did not like the little "bully." Do you know what a "bully" is? Well, it is a boy, or a man, who is all the time talking about whipping others. He tries to make others afraid of

him by big talk — just as Joe tried to frighten Frank. With all their big talk, they are often cowards.

"Can you tell me where I can get any lilies?" said Frank, after he had started to go.

"Don't you see them all round you?" replied Joe.

"Yes, but they are so far out that I cannot get them."

"Wait a minute or two,

and I will get some for you," added Joe.

This seemed very kind of him. Indeed it was not at all like Joe, for he was hardly ever known to do any thing for others. When his companions asked a favor of him, he would almost always refuse; and it was a real pleasure for him to deny them — he was so cross and ugly.

"I will give you something

if you will," said Frank, as he looked out to the place where the top of the water was almost white with full-blown lilies.

Frank put his hand into his pocket and drew out ever so many things, just such as you will find in nearly every boy's pocket. There was a knife, a lead pencil, three or four slate pencils, a tin whistle, a brass button, an old flint, a

piece of chalk, three peppermints, and two cents in specie.

"I will give you this whistle."

"Pooh! What's it good for?"

"It will whistle first rate," said Frank, as he blew it with all his might, so as to show Joe what a smart whistle it was.

"I don't want it. What else have you got?" And

Joe stopped his work for a moment to look at the contents of Frank's pocket. "Give me the two cents, and I will."

"You shall have them, if you will get me—let me see—twenty lilies."

"Give us the two cents then;" and Frank handed him the money.

Now our little friend thought he had made a good

bargain, and that he was very sharp to make Joe get him twenty lilies for two cents. But he ought not to have given him the money till he got the lilies. The best time to pay is after the work is done.

Frank waited a little longer till Joe finished the raft, and then he helped him slide it off the land into the water.

"Don't you want to go with me?" asked Joe.

"No, I guess not," replied Frank.

"Why not?"

"My father told me never to go in a boat unless there was a man with me."

"Pooh! This ain't a boat."

"It isn't—is it?" said Frank, musing.

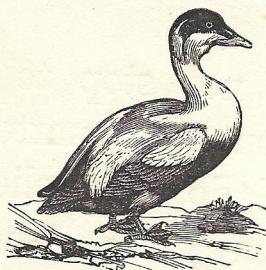
"Your father didn't tell you not to go on a raft," added Joe, who wanted Frank to help him push the raft out

from the shore, as he could not well do it alone.

Frank knew very well what his father meant when he told him not to go in a boat; but he wanted to go so much that he stepped on the raft with Joe.

He did not stop to think much about the matter; if he had, I do not believe he would have gone. The very fact of being in the company

of Joe Birch was enough to assure him he was wrong. When we are tempted, we ought to stop and think; and very often this will keep us from going astray.





On the Rocks.

II.

THE Bible says that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. Frank ought to have obeyed the spirit of his father's order, as well as the letter. He told him not to go in a *boat*; this was the letter. But he meant that he must not go on the water, either in a boat, on a raft, a log, or

any thing else; this was the spirit.

Don't you think Frank disobeyed his father just as much as though he had gone in a boat? I think so, and I am pretty sure you will think so.

A little boy's mother once told him not to go out the gate into the street. Pretty soon he was seen in the street, and his mother called him into the house.

" Didn't I tell you not to go out the gate ? " said she.

" I did not, mother," replied he ; " I got over the fence."

Don't you think this little boy disobeyed his mother? Don't you think he was just as naughty as though he had gone out at the gate? He only minded the letter of the command, when he should also have obeyed the spirit.

Frank was not satisfied

when he stepped on the raft, for he felt that he was doing wrong. But he only meant to go out a little way—just far enough to get the lilies.

Joe Birch had a long stick, and he and Frank pushed the raft away from the shore, into the deep water. The young voyagers were by this time fairly afloat. They were now in the midst of the lilies.

“I will help you get the

lilies,” said Frank; and he stooped on the raft and picked a full-blown one from the water.

“Not here; I want to sail a little before I get them.”

“But I don’t want to sail,” added Frank, who had only meant to get the lilies, and then go home.

“Can’t help that; I want you to go with me.”

“I don’t want to go.”

“But you must go. You shall help me push the raft.”

“I can’t go.”

“You shall!” said Joe, in such a tone that Frank felt very sorry he had got upon the raft at all.

“Let me off, and you may keep the two cents,” pleaded Frank.

“I mean to keep them, any how; so take your stick and push as hard as ever you can.”

“Please to let me off.”

“No, I won’t; that’s flat.”

Frank wanted to cry then; but he knew that Joe would only laugh at him if he did; so he kept down the tears, and tried to look bold.

The raft floated out into the deep water. The boys could not then reach the bottom with their poles; but the current bore the raft slowly down the river. Joe liked

the fun ; but Frank felt so bad that he wanted to cry rather than laugh.

The river grew wider as they went along, and the raft was out in the middle of it. Poor Frank began to be afraid he should never reach the land again, for their little bark was not very strong. The current had thrown some of the boards out of place, and he feared it would come

to pieces before they had gone much farther.

Perhaps he would not have been afraid, if he had not disobeyed his father. Doing wrong makes cowards of men, as well as boys. He could no longer stand up on the raft ; so he sat down on one of the boards.

Joe only laughed at him, but I think he too was afraid, though he did not like to

show his fear. Those who make fun and laugh when they are in danger, are often more frightened than those who look calm and serious.

For some distance the water was smooth, and the young voyagers got along very well. But they soon came to a place where the river was full of rocks. Some of them rose above the surface of the wa-

ter, and some of them were only just covered.

The stream was not so deep here, but the current was more rapid. The raft began to move faster, and Joe tried to keep it from striking against any of the rocks. This would have knocked the raft in pieces, and thrown the boys into the river.

Joe worked very hard, and he was angry because he had to do all the work alone.—

Frank was so frightened that he held on to the raft for dear life. O, how he wished himself once more on the land!

"Come, get up, and help me," said Joe.

"I can't; I am afraid," replied Frank.

"Yes, you can; jump up, and push off from the rocks."

"I can't stand up; I shall fall off into the water."

"Get up, or I will knock

you over the head with my pole."

"I can't."

Then Joe struck him on the back with the pole, and poor Frank, afraid the bad boy would throw him into the river, had to stand up. He was so terrified he could not do any thing to help Joe.

Just then the raft struck upon one of the hidden rocks. The shock threw Joe into the

river. Frank saw him sink down where the water was over his head. He was frightened almost to death, for he thought Joe must surely drown.

Frank had seated himself the moment the raft struck upon the rock, or he too must have been thrown off. The boards and the rails were all thrown out of place by the shock.

When Joe went into the

water, the raft was relieved of half its load. Then, as it did not sink down so deep as before, it passed over the sunken rock, and Frank was carried down the river. Expecting every moment to be pitched into the water, he held on with all his might, with both hands.

Joe could swim a little, and by the aid of his pole, he reached the rock, and climbed

upon the top of it. He was thus saved from drowning; but he had not a very good place to stand, for the water was half way up to his knees. Besides this, if no one came along to help him off, he might have to stand there all night. He did not think of such a thing as swimming ashore, for he knew he could not do it.

Frank gave himself up for lost. He never expected to

see his father and mother and Flora again. Then, more than before, he wished that he had obeyed his father. Then he promised himself, if his life could only be spared this time, that he never would disobey his parents again.

The raft floated rapidly down the river, till it came to a wide place called *Willow Pond*. It was about half a mile across from bank to

bank, and Frank was carried right out into the middle of it.

The current was not so swift here as in the narrow river; and when the raft had been carried out ever so far from the land, it seemed to stop. Frank could not see that it moved at all, and he was afraid, if not thrown into the water, that he should have to stay there all night.

But the raft did move,

though it did not seem to do so. It was more than an hour in passing through the pond. It was almost dark now, and every thing began to look very gloomy.

The poor little boy thought of his happy home, as the darkness began to gather around him. The pleasant parlor, where his father and mother and Flora were seated, seemed more cheerful than

ever. O, how he wished he was only there!

His parents and his sister were no doubt wondering why he did not come home. His father would go out to find him, and search all over the village for him. Then he thought how Flora would cry, if she only knew where he was at that moment.



Frank finds a Friend.

III.

Below the pond the river was deep and narrow for several miles; but its course lay, for a portion of the way, through a dense forest. The raft began to move faster now, and Frank soon found himself in the woods. The darkness was dismal enough.

The young voyager had

cried till he could cry no longer, and in despair he waited the fate that seemed to be in store for him. He could hardly see the banks on each side of him, but only the black and moaning trees, which seemed to be painted on the starless sky.

The night air was chilly, and he began to feel very cold. His teeth chattered, and the water, which touched

his hands, seemed almost like ice.

I have said that Frank was generally a good boy. He was a member of the Sunday school, and had been taught that there is a good Father above who watches over us, and who "doeth all things well." He knew that this kind Father above could save him, and restore him to his parents.

Looking up to the cold, gloomy sky where he thought the Father lived, he asked him for help. He prayed that God would save him from the Night and the Deep around him.

When Frank had said his simple but earnest prayer, he thought he felt better. In a little while he was quite sure of it. His prayer had driven away that dreary sense of

loneliness. He was no longer alone, for the Father was with him.

The raft then seemed to be guided by unseen hands, and he felt stronger than before. He no longer wanted to cry, and his heart was filled with hope.

He had heard some one say that "God helps him who will help himself." The words were full of cheer, and he

firmly grasped the forked stick which he still held.

But what could a little boy like him do against the current of the great river? He was a weak and puny child, and the stream was strong enough to turn the great wheels of the mills; to carry off houses, and even wear down the mighty hills.

He felt that he must do something; so he took his

stick and paddled with all his might on one side of the raft. For half an hour he worked like a hero; but the raft still kept on its way, just as though he had done nothing at all.

This hard work, though it did not bring the raft up to the shore, did him a great deal of good. Besides giving him something to think about, it warmed his blood, so that he no longer felt chilled.

It made him feel brave too. He no longer feared the night and the deep water. He felt that he was doing just what the good Father wanted him to do, and that, if he worked hard, God would help him.

For two hours more the raft kept on its way, and poor Frank was tired out with hard labor. His work did not seem to do any good. He was almost ready to give

up in despair, when the raft whirled round a bend of the river, and he passed out of the gloom of the forest.

But a great noise started him, and he stopped paddling to listen. It was the sound of rushing waters. He trembled, and had almost screamed with fear, for he knew it was the noise of a waterfall. He must be dashed in pieces if the raft went over the fall.

At the same time he saw a great many lights, and he was sure the raft had borne him to the village of Spindleton, which was seven miles below Riverdale.

It was a great deal worse to be dashed to pieces on the rocks than it was to be drowned. His fears made him almost crazy; but then he thought of the good Father above again, and that he could

save and restore him to his dear parents and sister.

"God helps him who helps himself," said Frank to himself, as he went to work with the stick again. He paddled with all his might for a while, but it did no good. Feeling that he must do something more, he tried to stand up on the raft. He could hardly do so at first, but he soon got a firm footing.

Then, finding he was only a little way from the shore, he tried to reach the bottom with his pole. To his great joy, he found the water was shallow, and he pushed with all his strength.

At this moment he saw a light close by the bank of the river. It was a man with a lantern in his hand.

"Help!" shouted Frank, as loud as he could.

"Hallo!" replied the man.
"Help! save me!" repeated Frank.

"Where are you?"
"In the river."

The man ran down to the bank, and by the light of his lantern saw the young voyager, pushing away with all his might.

"Push away, my boy, or you will be carried over the dam," said the man.

"I can't push any more ; I am tired out," replied Frank.

The man, at these words, put his lantern down on a stump, and waded into the river till he could reach the raft. With a strong arm he dragged it to the shore, and taking Frank up, he bore him to the dry land.

How the heart of the poor boy leaped with joy when he found that he was safe ! He

felt that the good Father had saved him, and he thanked him for his kindness and his mercy.

"Who are you, my boy ?" asked the man.

"My name is Frank Lee," replied he.

"How came you on that raft at this time of night ?"

"I was naughty, and did not mind my father."

"Well, come into the house.

Poor little fellow! you are wet and cold."

The man took him by the hand, and led him to his house. He was a poor man, and earned his living with a horse and wagon, carting goods from the railroad station to the mill. He had gone to feed his horse when he heard Frank's cry for help.

Mr. Brown (for this was the man's name) made up a great

fire in the kitchen, so that he could dry his clothes. Then he called up his wife, who had gone to bed, and she got him some supper.

The warm fire and the supper made poor Frank feel better, and he would have been happy if it had not been for the thought of his father and mother and Flora. They must fear that he was lost or drowned, and he wanted to

go home at once, to allay their anxiety.

"Who is your father, Frank?" asked the man, when he had eaten his supper.

"Edward Lee, of Riverdale," replied he.

"Dear me! Are you the son of Mr. Lee, of Riverdale?"

"Yes, sir; I am."

Frank told the story of his voyage down the river as quick as he could, and then

said his father must feel very bad on account of him.

"I will go over to Riverdale, and tell him you are safe," said Mr. Brown, lighting his lantern again.

"Thank you, sir; and I will go with you, if you please."

"But, my poor boy, you are all worn out. You are not fit to go home to-night."

"I would rather go."

Mr. Brown said he might,

if he felt able, and in a little while the horse and wagon were at the door. The good man had filled the wagon with straw, and he told Frank to lie down upon it. He then covered him up with a blanket, and started for Riverdale.

In a few moments, Frank, tired out and unable to keep his eyes open, dropped asleep.



Joe Birch is saved.

IV.

FRANK slept soundly while the wagon rolled slowly along through the woods towards Riverdale. He had never been so tired before in his life. He was not used to work, and his hands were covered with blisters, which had been made by using the pole on the raft.

Mr. Brown's horse could not go very fast, for he was only a cart horse. It took him nearly two hours to go from Spindleton to Riverdale. I don't suppose he liked very well to be taken from the stable, after a hard day's work, to go so far in the night.

But his master was happy enough for both of them, for he knew how sorrowful must

be the hearts of Frank's father and mother. He was carrying good tidings to them; and we are always happy when we do good to others. I think the old horse would have been pleased if he had only known how much good he was doing.

It was almost midnight when the wagon entered the village of Riverdale. Frank was still asleep — perhaps

dreaming of his happy home. Although it was so late, there was a light in nearly every house.

Lights were moving back and forth, too, in the woods and all along the river. People in the village were running here and there, and all seemed to be as active as though it were broad daylight. The stores were open, and men were continually hailing each other

as they passed hurriedly along the road.

All this was because a little boy had been naughty, and disobeyed his father. It was because Frank had stepped on the raft with Joe Birch, that all the people were kept up half the night; that hundreds of men, who had worked hard all day, were searching the woods and dragging the river.

Besides the family of Mr. Lee, there was another in great distress. Joe Birch, though he was a very bad boy, had loving parents at home, and nothing could be found of him.

"Hallo!" shouted a man to Mr. Brown as he drove into the village. "Heard anything?"

"About the boy, do you mean?" questioned Mr. Brown.

"Yes; I have him here, in my wagon."

The man shouted for joy, and running through the streets, proclaimed the good news that the lost boy had been found. The people ran out into the streets, even the women and children, for no one could sleep while they feared poor Frank was lost or dead.

The loud cries rang in the

still air of midnight, and in a few moments the wagon of Mr. Brown was surrounded by a great crowd. They shouted and hurrahed with all their might, for they knew how glad Mr. and Mrs. Lee would be to find their lost son.

Some of the men ran over to the woods and the river to tell those who were searching for Frank, that he had been

found. The crowd grew bigger and bigger, as they drew near to the house of Mr. Lee.

As the wagon and the crowd entered the gate that led to Mr. Lee's house, the people cheered with all their might, and the noise they made seemed to shake the very hills.

By this time the poor tired boy, who had caused all the trouble, had waked up. He

cried with joy when he saw his father's house. When he got out from under the blanket, and stood up, the people cheered him, just as though he had been a great general, coming home from the wars.

When the great crowd entered the gate, Mr. Lee, and Mrs. Lee, and Flora ran out to learn what the news was. They concluded, from the cheers and shouts, that Frank

had been found; and they all wept for joy.

The wagon stopped at the front door, and Mr. Brown took Frank in his arms and handed him to his father. Mr. Lee pressed the lost boy to his bosom, and rushed into the house, followed by Mrs. Lee and Flora.

The poor mother had sobbed and moaned all the evening. She was almost sure her dar-

ling boy was dead, and nothing could console her. Flora's grief was not less than that of her mother. Both of them had suffered more than words can describe.

Mr. Lee was calmer, but he felt quite as badly. He had just returned from the river when the wagon arrived, and had almost given up his last hope.

Flora and her mother

laughed and wept over the little wanderer. I can't tell you how many times they kissed and hugged him, nor how many times Frank promised never, never, never to disobey his father again. But he was freely forgiven.

It took him ever so long to tell the story of his voyage down the river. The crowd had pressed into the house till the entry and rooms were

filled. They heard Frank's account of the trip on the raft, and when he came to the part where Joe Birch had been thrown into the water, and had climbed upon the rock, they said he must be there still.

The people had not gone down the river so far, and it was quite likely that poor Joe was then upon the rock, if he had not been washed

off and drowned. Some of the crowd, therefore, ran away to the river to save the poor boy.

Two or three boats, full of men with lanterns, rowed down the river just as fast as oars could drive them. As they drew near to the place, they heard Joe's piteous cries, and pretty soon they found him on the rock, just where Frank had left

him, in the early part of the evening.

He was wet through and shivering with cold. He had been scared almost to death, and he was glad enough when the men took him into the boat. One of them threw off his coat and wrapped it round him, but he was so chilled and wet that he shivered all the way home.

Joe's parents were very

glad to see him again, and they hoped his sufferings would make him a better boy. He had given his father and mother a great deal of trouble, as all bad boys do, and they thought that good would flow from the evil.

The crowd staid at Mr. Lee's house more than an hour, and Frank had to answer a great many questions.

He had to tell how he felt in the darkness, what he had tried to do with the pole, and how Joe had made him go when he only meant to get some lilies for Flora.

Mr. Brown was called into the house, and treated as though he had been a lord instead of a poor man. Mrs. Lee and Flora thanked him over and over again; and Mr. Lee not only thanked him, but

gave him money enough to buy a new horse and wagon.

The poor man did not want to take this money. He had only done his duty, he said; and it was not much to pull a poor little boy out of the river. Mr. Lee made him take the money, and said he should do a good deal more for him.

Mr. Lee wished him to stay all night, but he could not.

He had a job to do in the morning, though he was afraid his poor horse would not be fit to work. Then Mr. Lee told his men to harness one of his cart horses to Mr. Brown's wagon, so the tired animal that had drawn Frank home might rest for two or three days.

When Mr. Brown had gone, the crowd retired; but I don't think the people in Riverdale

slept much that night. Then Flora and Frank said their prayers, and thanked the good Father for all his mercy to them. In a little while they were both asleep.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee thanked God for returning their son to them, but they could not sleep for hours.

Poor Frank was sick for a week from the effects of his voyage; but when he got

well, he was a better boy than ever before, and was always very careful to mind his parents.

